

CLAIMS

1. A method for launching processes in a computer that has an operating system, comprising:

storing a launch list of initiation data for at least one process to be launched;

for each process, storing any access and authentication information required

5 to initiate the process, as well as associated launch data identifying secondary information associated with any of the processes to be launched;

upon sensing a launch event:

automatically retrieving initiation data for each process in the launch list, as well as the associated launch data for each process; and

10 automatically initiating execution of each process in the launch list and automatically retrieving and associating with each initiated process the corresponding secondary information.

2. A method as in claim 1, in which at least one process to be launched
15 involves access to at least one remote site, further comprising automatically accessing the remote site over a network, a network address for each remote site comprising the secondary information of the process.

3. A method as in claims 1 or 2, further comprising:
20 automatically detecting identifying information of a currently active process and its current secondary information; and
upon user confirmation, automatically storing access information and the current secondary information for subsequent automatic launch upon sensing the launch event.

25
4. A method as in any of claims 1-3, further comprising:
automatically detecting identifying information of a process currently being launched manually by a user;
upon user confirmation, automatically storing the identifying information of the
30 process currently being launched manually by a user as access information for subsequent automatic launch upon sensing the launch event.

5. A method as in any of the claims 1-4, in which:
the secondary information includes access and authentication information
such as a password; and
the step of automatically initiating execution of each process includes
5 automatically submitting the secondary information.

6. A method as in claim 1, comprising automatically launching two or
more processes simultaneously, that is, without requiring intermediate user action.

10 7. A method as in claim 6, comprising automatically and simultaneously
launching both processes that access network content and processes that access
only locally stored files.

8. A system for launching processes in a computer that has system
15 hardware (100), system software (110), and a memory (120), comprising:
a launch list (122) of initiation data for at least one process (130; 132) to be
launched;

a stored set (126) of any access and authentication information required to
initiate the process, as well as associated launch data set identifying secondary
20 information associated with any of the processes to be launched;

an auto-launch software module (150) comprising computer-executable code
that, upon sensing a launch event:

automatically retrieves initiation data for each process in the launch
list, as well as the associated launch data for each process; and

25 automatically initiates execution of each process in the launch list (122)
and automatically retrieves and associates with each initiated process the
corresponding secondary information.

9. A system as in claim 8, in which:
30 at least one process to be launched involves access to at least one remote
site (162);

the system hardware includes a network-connection device (103) that forms
an interface between the computer and a network (160);

the memory (120) includes a list (124) of network addresses;

the auto-launch software module (150) includes computer-executable code for automatically accessing the remote site over the network (160), a network address for each remote site comprising the secondary information of the process.

5

10. A system as in claims 8 or 9, in which the auto-launch software module (150) includes further computer-executable:

for automatically detecting identifying information of a currently active process and its current secondary information; and

10 upon user confirmation, for automatically storing in the memory (120) access information and the current secondary information for subsequent automatic launch upon sensing the launch event.

11. A system as in any of claims 8-10, further comprising:

15 at least one input device (105, 106, 107, 108) connected to the system hardware (100) for manual input by a user;

the auto-launch software module (150) includes further computer-executable code

20 that automatically detects identifying information of a process currently being launched manually by a user, and

upon user confirmation, that automatically stores in the memory (120) the identifying information of the process currently being launched manually by the user as access information for subsequent automatic launch upon sensing the launch event.

25

12. A system as in claim 8, in which the auto-launch software module (150) automatically launches two or more processes simultaneously, that is, without requiring intermediate user action.

30 13. A system as in claim 8, in which the auto-launch software module (150) automatically launches both processes that access content over a network (160) and processes that access only locally stored files.